Minutes of the

Meeting of the Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches

Video Conference, 20-24 July 2020

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I. First Plenary Session, 20 July – Opening Actions

A. Welcome by the moderator

On behalf of the leadership of the central committee (LCC), Dr Agnes Abuom (Anglican Church of Kenya), moderator of the WCC central committee, welcomed the members of the executive committee. She thanked WCC staff for preparing the meeting. She also thanked the LCC, particularly Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson (United Methodist Church), vice-moderator of the central committee, for whom the meeting began at 5.00 in the morning.

She asked the committee to observe a minute of silence in memory of Congressman John Lewis, an American politician and civil-rights leader, who had recently passed away. Congressman Lewis met with the WCC delegation visiting the National Council of Churches in Christ in the USA (NCCCUSA) in 2017. The minute of silence was also observed in memory of the 600,000 people around the world who had lost their lives to COVID-19. Church leaders from Madagascar, Congo and South Sudan were also remembered. Thanks were offered for these lives and remembering the families who had been unable to lay to rest their loved ones in the usual way.

Bishop Simo Peura (Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland) led the committee in prayer to begin the meeting.

The moderator invited Mr Doug Chial (interim director in the office of the general secretary) to present the agenda and protocol for the video conference, including the use of indicator cards, chat function, etc. Dr Abuom encouraged the members to keep discussion to the time indicated in the annotated agenda. She asked the group for ecumenical discipline and mutual respect, affirming each other in the principles of the fellowship and values as a Christian community.

B. Roll call

The required threshold for participation (two-thirds, Rule XVIII.8) was established with 22 members present, as registered through the video conference tool (see Appendix 1 for list of participants).

Apologies were received for the following members of the committee:

- Rev. Cora Luisa Antonio Matamoros, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
- H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune Aregawi, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
- H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Gennadios of Sassima, Ecumenical Patriarchate
- Rev. Martina Viktorie Kopecká, Czechoslovak Hussite Church
- Rev. Taaroanui Maraea, Église protestante Maohi

C. Approval of agenda

The agenda for the meeting was approved as presented. The moderator highlighted issues that would be covered in the closed session.

D. Minutes of previous meetings

The minutes of the executive committee meetings in November 2019 (Bossey) and June 2020 (video conference) had been shared earlier on the governing body document resource and discussion portal. The edits suggested by the members, as submitted on the portal, were accepted. Both sets of minutes were approved by consensus.

II. Remarks of the moderator

In her opening remarks, WCC central committee moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, focused on how churches can continue to be beacons of hope and provide accurate information during the COVID-19 pandemic, how to address sexual and gender-based violence and lessen the risk of violence against children, and how the WCC can continue to use online approaches to listen to the fellowship and be a voice of reason and support.

She also expressed concern about the significant increase in violence against women and children during this COVID-19 period. Financial hardship due to restriction of movement and curfew affects livelihoods, especially for those working in the informal sector. Confinement at home under heightened levels of stress, uncertainty and fear, can produce stressful environments that precipitate violence. At this time, children are at heightened risk of all forms of violence, including violent discipline by family members and emotional abuse.

Added to the pain of COVID-19 is the fact that measures to mitigate the pandemic have made Christians abstain from physically attending church. She shared her particular situation in Kenya where those under 13 and over 58 are not allowed to attend services. This is a challenge to religious formation for the next generations and skews the image of the Body of Christ. There also are growing mental health challenges because of the current situation. Some cannot bury their loved ones properly. The member churches are trying to accompany their parishioners in these difficult circumstances. She concluded her remarks quoting Psalm 1: "*Happy are those who do not follow the advice of the wicked; or take the path that sinners tread, or sit in seat of scoffers; but their delight is in the law of the Lord; They are like trees planted by the streams of water; which yield their fruit in season; and their leaves do not wither. In all they do, they prosper".* (NRSV)

III. Accountability report of the interim general secretary

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca, interim general secretary, expressed his joy at seeing the executive committee and thanked the members for making themselves available. He was encouraged by the preparatory work for the meeting done together with the LCC and expressed his gratitude to God as "the one who steers the boat on which we are sailing". His presentation is recorded here in full:

> "You all received the June and July accountability reports. In this short report I want to share some highlights from the past months about the work of the secretariat, our engagement with the fellowship of churches and how we are responding to the mandate you gave us in June regarding sustainability and racism.

The work of the secretariat – what we have done

By God's grace our WCC staff members are healthy and safe, including the staff in Geneva, Africa, New York and Jerusalem. In Geneva and at Bossey, we follow the recommendations of the Swiss federal authorities regarding the conditions for returning to work and the required protection plan.

Though the ecumenical centre remains closed to the public, we asked staff to return to the office as from Monday, 6 July, with the possibility of teleworking for up to three days per week. We continue to have Monday morning prayer and most meetings on Zoom.

There was an all staff meeting on Monday, 8 June on Zoom to report the outcomes of the executive committee and there will be an all staff meeting on 7 September to report the outcomes of this meeting.

WCC staff are deeply engaged in adapting to the current situation, learning how to continue their work with online methods and addressing the changes affecting the churches.

In June we continued monitoring the impact of COVID-19 on our plans and budgets to assess to what extent 2020 expected outcomes have been or will be met and to document the status of planned activities and events. A report on observed trends affirms the pandemic will continue shaping new approaches, lead to further adaptations and require close monitoring, including further financial forecasting in September. Monitoring will be discussed in the programme and finance sub-committees.

In spite of uncertainties, planning for 2021 continues. We prepared draft plans and budgets for the coming year and published them with funding requests to our partners, requesting feedback by mid-September so we can revise them for presentation to the executive committee in November. The funding request budget will be discussed in the finance sub-committee.

The work with the fellowship – what we have achieved together

The accountability reports give you a full picture of what we achieved with the member churches and ecumenical partners since the executive committee last met. COVID-19 may have disrupted our ability to travel, but not our ability to convene our churches and partners in addressing the needs of the world.

I would like to highlight a few achievements over the past weeks:

- The WCC continues to be a good source of information about COVID-19, providing information, liturgical resources, responding to questions and engaging our churches.
- As follow-up to the executive committee statement on racial justice in the US, we produced an advocacy video to amplify the voice of the churches in the US.
- We have continued our pilgrimage of justice and peace with Korea, both marking the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War; and joining the first ever

women of faith virtual pilgrim team visit to deepen international solidarity with Korean women.

- We raised up the voice of the churches in the Philippines in protesting human rights violations and the arrest of church leaders.
- We convened the executive of the Joint Working Group with Roman Catholic Church online to maintain the momentum of intense collaboration.
- We published a letter urging the Turkish government to keep Hagia Sophia as the shared heritage of humanity; and received support from Muslim leaders including Al Azhar, Higher Committee of Human Fraternity (HCHF), and others.
- We agreed on new dates for the assembly with the host churches to present for decision at this meeting.

What all of these examples have in common is the direct involvement of members of the executive committee and these are only some examples of how you are involved. I want to thank you for your tireless efforts, not only to attend meetings, but to engage the fellowship of churches in what it means to be on a pilgrimage of justice and peace as an expression of our unity in Christ and our common witness to the world.

The mandate of the executive committee – what we have done with the mandate you gave us in June

When the executive committee met in June, you gave us the mandate to develop special plans for the sustainability of WCC programmatic work in 2021 in light of a revised budget for 2020 and the ongoing impact of COVID-19. You also reinforced the mandate to scale up the response to racism.

In approaching this we sought to be strategic, responsive and responsible; asking not only how to ensure that our work is planned with the financial means available, but trying to anticipate the needs of the churches in the time of COVID and increasing social unrest. At this meeting, we are asking for feedback on the direction for sustainability, so we can move forward with our plans.

- As we discussed in June, the Assembly Office has been restructured with the closure of the position of the Assembly Coordinator as a result of the postponement.
- Last year the executive committee gave us a mandate to reshape health and healing work. The work continues, but we have already consolidated staffing to reduce costs and enhance cooperation with ecumenical partners.
- An evaluation of the Jerusalem Inter-church Centre (JIC) was conducted last year. After consulting with local churches, we bring to this meeting a management response with proposals to consolidate the WCC presence in Jerusalem. The programme sub-committee will review this.
- In response to COVID-19, we have scaled-up online services and programme delivery. The new situation is an opportunity revise our communication strategy. I will say more about this in the closed session on Friday.
- The executive committee has been encouraging us to scale-up work on racism. The programme sub-committee will review plans to establish a transversal on overcoming racism as from next year. Our objective is to strengthen the

ecumenical response of WCC member churches and ecumenical partners to the manifestations of racism, racial discrimination, and xenophobia today in a coherent and intersectional way. The plan is financed by available resources.

- In our approach to planning 2021, direct programme implementation costs were reduced in general by about 20% compared with the original approved budget for 2020, recognising there are new methodologies for almost all projects.
- The long-term sustainability of the WCC includes the Green Village development project. Since we last met, all the apartments in the Montreal building have found a buyer, with sales transactions completed for 67%. The steering committee met last week, and the finance sub-committee will review their reports.

With these measures, I am confident that we are on the path to sustainability both in terms of financial resources, but also in anticipating the needs of the fellowship. There is more to report, but much of it will be addressed when I present the overview of matters for decision for this meeting concerning governance, programme and finance.

What is clearer now than when we met in June is that the world is in a state of rapid change. We can hardly predict what tomorrow will bring. Reading the signs of our times is more challenging because of the speed of change. More and more we need to anticipate what is coming so we are prepared to address it. The executive committee has a special role in guiding the fellowship through this time. This is the governing body charged with managing risk to the institution and also to the fellowship. We need your wisdom more than ever. Thanks so much for your involvement, especially that of the moderator."

The moderator thanked the interim general secretary for his report and confirmed that the report was referred to all sub-committees.

IV. Sharing from executive committee members

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian (Armenian Apostolic Church [Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin]) spoke about the global economic crisis resulting from the pandemic. He thought that for Europe and North America the crisis could last for 1-3 years but for the global South the people will suffer for much longer. The struggle against racism in the USA continues. He asked what WCC's position on the economic crisis would be and what member churches can do to stop this horrible racism in USA.

Rev. Festus Asana (Presbyterian Church in Cameroon) thanked the moderator for her presentation of the many issues affecting the churches today. He congratulated WCC for the visit to Cameroon to see how things are on the ground. He added that, despite the dangers, he would be returning to Cameroon next month, to bear witness to hope, even in the midst of chaos and seeming hopelessness.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim Kykotis (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa) added that many people in Zimbabwe, and in Africa do not have enough food because they

are unable to work in the situation of COVID. He commended the interim general secretary for the letter about Hagia Sophia and noted that the 20 July marked the anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus 46 years ago. The silence and tolerance of the international community to the violations of the principles of the UN, including the transformation of many of our Christian churches into mosques is staggering. At the time in 1974, only WCC came out with strong statements against the invasion and its consequences.

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae (Presbyterian Church of Korea) highlighted the Women of Faith Virtual Pilgrim Team Visit to South Korea the previous week. There were 30 international women participants from different parts of the world. Both the international pilgrims and Korean women hosts were mutually inspired and encouraged to find women's resilience and women's solidarity and commitment to justice and peace. She expressed gratitude to the WCC staff who worked hard in collaboration with the Women's Committee of the NCCK to make this pilgrimage a memorable station on the journey.

Dr Abuom thanked the members for their contributions.

V. Overview of Matters for Decision

The moderator invited the interim general secretary to present the overview of matters for decision by the executive committee, including suggested actions. Fr Sauca explained that each item of business would be referred to the appropriate sub-committee for discussion over the next three days. Sub-committee reports, with recommendations, would be presented in plenary for decision on the last day of the executive committee.

A. Programme

1. Narrative reports 2019

The full reports and summary narrative reports of the programmatic work of the council were shared with the members. The reports are referred to the programme sub-committee and the executive committee was asked to receive the reports.

2. Monitoring 2020

The exercise of monitoring the work done so far in 2020 produced both a full report and highlighted trends observed. The plans fall within the limits of the revised budget and reflect the flexibility of the staff in carrying out the work of the WCC in these changing times. The document is referred to the programme sub-committee and the executive committee is asked to comment on and receive the report.

3. Called to Transformative Action: Ecumenical *Diakonia*

In November 2019 the executive committee had recommended that the resource document "Called to Transformative Action: Ecumenical Diakonia" be presented to the central committee for information as a resource document. Due to the postponement of the central committee to June 2021, there is strong interest from member churches and ecumenical partners to have access to the document as a resource for their work.

The revision of the document responded to the concerns of the central committee and was strengthened with chapters on regional and confessional perspectives. Both the moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom, and the vice-moderator of the central committee, His Eminence Metropolitan Gennadios (Ecumenical Patriarchate), provided leadership in the revision process.

The document is referred to the programme sub-committee and the executive committee is asked to receive further revisions, commission new material on the context of COVID-19 and offer guidance on how the share the resource with churches and partners that want to use the document.

4. Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre

An external evaluation of the Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre (JIC) was conducted last year to review the mandate, relevance and effectiveness of programme. After studying the report and consulting with churches in Jerusalem and with the Middle East Council of Churches, a management response was developed proposing a comprehensive and coherent consolidation of all WCC activities in Jerusalem. The matter is referred to the programme sub-committee and the proposals are presented to the executive committee for decision.

5. Transversal on overcoming racism

In 2019 the executive committee received a concept paper on establishing a programmatic initiative on racism. The executive committee recommended that the programmatic work on overcoming racism should:

- have an intersectional approach;
- help member churches and ecumenical partners work together in overcoming racism, racial discrimination and xenophobia;
- address hate speech against minorities as a major concern to democracy.

In June 2020 the committee asked the council to monitor the social unrest in response to racism and propose appropriate action. The proposal to establish a transversal on overcoming racism to start from 1 January 2021 is now presented to the executive committee for decision. This matter is referred to the programme sub-committee.

B. Governance

1. Nominations

Five people are nominated to replace members of the Commission on World Mission and Evangelism who resigned. One person is nominated to replace an observer on the Commission of the Churches in International Affairs. Nominations are referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee.

2. Constitution and rules

With regard to constitution and rules, the Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration, which met in February 2020, commented on proposals of the working group on constitution and rules regarding the use of electronic communications for consultation and decision-making. The executive committee itself has first-hand experience with using

the portal and with meeting on Zoom. The proposed amendments on the use of electronic communication should be reviewed before finalizing the proposal to the central committee. The matter is referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee.

3. 11th WCC Assembly

The report of the Assembly Planning Committee (December 2019) is presented to the executive committee for information, along with an update on assembly preparations. To date nominations from 216 member churches (63%) have been received for a total of 437 delegates; and another 140 suggested additional delegates.

In spite of the postponement of the central committee, preparations continue in the spirit and vision of the APC report through staff preparations and close collaboration with the Karlsruhe assembly office and the local host committee. The collaboration of the three offices – Geneva, Karlsruhe and Hannover – has been very positive. Thanks were expressed to Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber (Evangelical Church in Germany) for her work and support.

Following the postponement of the assembly to 2022, new dates were discussed with host churches and the city of Karlsruhe. The available dates are Wednesday, 31 August to Thursday, 8 September 2022. Pre-assemblies would take place 29-30 August (Monday and Tuesday).

The Assembly Planning Committee will meet again in September by video conference. Further work is needed to address how the theme of the assembly responds to the current global realities of the COVID-19 pandemic and growing social unrest with racism and other forms of inequality. More work is also needed to refine the linkages between the biblical texts for daily use in prayer, thematic plenaries, home groups and Bible study.

Due to the postponement of the central committee, invitations to partner churches that are not members of the WCC have not yet been issued. This includes the Roman Catholic Church and Pentecostal churches in dialogue with the WCC.

The suggested actions for the executive committee are to encourage the APC to continue its work in this direction, to set dates for the assembly, to issue pending invitations, to inform member churches and ecumenical partners and request outstanding nominations. Assembly matters are referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee.

4. Future meetings of governing bodies

The African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, through WCC central committee member Bishop Dr Staccato Powell, had invited the executive committee to meet in Pasadena, California in November 2020. Because of the global health situation and recent civil unrest in the USA, it was agreed that meeting there would not be possible at this time.

A proposal is made for the executive committee to meet by video conference in November 2020. New dates are proposed to work with the video conference methodology. Dates for meeting in November 2021 are also proposed. These are referred to the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee.

C. Finance

1. Financial profile 2021

The financial profile for 2021 programmatic work presented to the executive includes CHF 17.2 million in programme income. The profile includes the proposals under consideration at this meeting to ensure the sustainability of WCC programmatic work.

2. Appointment of the auditors for 2020

In 2019 KPMG was appointed as auditor, in principle for a five-year period, subject to annual appointment. Re-appointment KPMG for 2020 is proposed at this time.

3. Loan reimbursement

Regarding the reimbursement of the pension fund loan, which now stands at CHF 18 million, there will be an opportunity to reimburse a further portion of the loan in September. Depending on the proceeds of land sales collected by that date, a decision on the value to be reimbursed will be required. It is suggested to delegate authority to the leadership of the finance sub-committee to decide on the level of reimbursement in September.

4. Matters arising on monitoring

The finance sub-committee will monitor the current financial situation, actions on prior recommendations and progress with the WCC financial strategy. Proposed recommendations refer to monitoring reservations at the Bossey guesthouse, maintaining target infrastructure costs, progress with staff performance appraisals and other matters arising from the work of the sub-committee.

5. Green Village

Further to its meeting of 16 July 2020, the steering committee issued its report to the general secretary for consideration at this meeting. The report of the steering committee of March 2020 is also shared with the executive committee for information.

Recommendations concern the continued approach with the sustainability certification, and specifically in finalisation of terms offered by the Swiss association; and the signing authorities to apply on finalisation of contracts, being both the Addendum to the Agreement on the One Planet Living principles, and the leases and development agreement required to move forward with the work on the building permit for the hotel project.

All finance and Green Village matters are referred to the finance sub-committee.

Following the overview of matters for decision, the moderator reminded the members that comments to any of the sub-committees could be sent through email to the dedicated addresses as listed on the annotated agenda.

D. First presentation of public issues statements

Before beginning with public issues, Dr Abuom reminded the committee that there are certain critical issues where member churches have to be on board for WCC to make public

statements. She asked that the members to remember that the executive committee is acting on behalf of the member churches and needs to include them.

The moderator noted that the previous week three draft statements and one draft minute were shared with the executive committee for consideration:

- Annexation of Occupied Palestinian Territories by the State of Israel
- Situations of Concern in Nigeria
- Crisis in Lebanon
- Jerusalem Jaffa Gate Properties Case Outcome.

These will be presented and feedback can be sent by email to the public issues sub-committee. The sub-committee will meet on Wednesday, under the leadership of H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr Nifon of Targoviste (Romanian Orthodox Church). Revised statements will be reviewed in plenary on Friday.

The moderator invited Mr Peter Prove (director of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs [CCIA]), to present the statements.

The text on the Annexation of Occupied Palestinian Territories by the State of Israel is not agreed on by the local churches and as the annexation has not yet occurred, it was suggested that this statement be kept for possible issuing at a later date.

H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken Aykazian recommended that a statement on the conflict in Armenia and Azerbaijan be issued. He said that the Turkish government is pushing a Muslim ideology in the region and that Azerbaijan is under great influence of Turkey. The current situation of conflict could become an all-out war. He felt that this is the right moment for executive committee to make a statement about the situation. Azerbaijan soldiers have been attacking civilians and villages and if WCC says nothing, no one else will speak out. The Christian world is waiting for such a statement.

Mr Prove reminded the committee that the interim general secretary had issued an urgent statement on 16 July calling for a de-escalation of the confrontation. Both countries are already impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and a factory that manufactures masks on the Armenian side was destroyed. There is lots of material damage in Armenia and women and children have been evacuated. The statement called for resumption of a dialogue to deal with the root causes of the conflict. The current information is that there has been no bombings for four days and that both sides are respecting the cease fire.

H.E. Archbishop Vicken also spoke about the plan for Hagia Sophia to be re-converted to a mosque. He had been in a meeting with the US state department on what they are doing to stop this and was assured that they would do their best. He was sorry that the western world seems to completely ignore Eastern Christianity. He recommended that the executive committee make a statement on this now.

The committee was informed that the interim general secretary had also written a letter to H.E. Recep Tayyip Erdogan, President of the Republic of Turkey, on 11 July expressing hope and prayer that Hagia Sophia would not become a focus of confrontation and conflict, but

would be restored to the emblematic unifying role that it has served since 1934. The interim general secretary asked the committee to consider timing of statements by the general secretary in relation to those made by the executive committee.

H.E. Seraphim responded by saying that anytime the general secretary can speak on behalf of the churches, he should, according to the WCC Rules. For crucial or particularly sensitive matters, when there is a risk, he can consult with the LCC. When the executive committee meets, it is responsible for determining whether action is needed.

Mr Thomas Hyeono Kang (Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil) told the committee that in the context of COVID-19 the National Council of Christian Churches of Brazil (CONIC) has raised the situation regarding Indigenous Peoples and descendants of former slaves, both vulnerable communities. He did not recommend that a statement be made at this time, but wanted to inform the executive committee. Mr Prove added that the council was preparing to implement a multi-pronged response on that issue, including communication to Brazilian leadership and engagement with the UN human rights system.

H.E. Seraphim proposed to work on issues of economy sustainable development goals and the cooperation of all nations in preparation of the UN General Assembly in September. A statement could be prepared on this with the Ecumenical UN Office in New York.

He added that there were also conflicts in Ethiopia and Sudan on the waters of the Nile. Dr Abuom said she had spoken to the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) general secretary about the situation. Mr Prove said that his colleagues were consulting the member churches and AACC on the situation in order to decide on a joint action.

The moderator affirmed that the public issues sub-committee would consider the prepared statements, as well as those issues which had been proposed during the discussion and make recommendations for the executive committee to take action. The members were invited to share their comments with the sub-committee by email. She also asked the sub-committee to consider the timing of statements of the general secretary and governing bodies and the process which should be followed.

VI. Closing remarks on the first day, 20 July 2020

At the end of the session, the moderator reminded the members that sub-committees would work over the next three days with everyone returning to plenary on Friday, 24 July for the decision session. She confirmed the following roles:

- Public Issues – H.E. Metropolitan Nifon, moderator, with Mr Prove coordinating drafting
- Programme – Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber, moderator, with Rev. Karin van den Broeke (Protestant Church in the Netherlands) as rapporteur
- Personnel, Staffing and Nominations – H.E. Zachariah Mar Nicholovos (Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church), as moderator in the absence of H.E. Metropolitan Gennadios, with Bishop Simo Peura as the rapporteur
- Finance – H.E. Archbishop Vicken, moderator, with Rev. Karl Johnson (Jamaica Baptist Union) as rapporteur.

The moderator reminded the members to send additional comments to the sub-committees through email. She gave thanks for the gift of life, for the hours worked, and for the dedication of the committee members.

Bishop Simo Peura led the closing prayer.

VII. Sub-committee meetings

On 23 and 25 July 2020 the programme sub-committee; staffing, nominations and personnel sub-committee; and finance sub-committee met by video conference to review matters for decision and to prepare recommendations and a narrative report for consideration by the executive committee.

On 24 July 2020 the public issues sub-committee met by video conference to review feedback to the draft statements and to prepare revised statements and a report for consideration by the executive committee.

VIII. Second Plenary Session, 24 July 2020

Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson, vice-moderator of the central committee, moderated the decision session in plenary. She welcomed the group back to the meeting.

Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae led the opening prayer.

IX. Report of the Personnel, Staffing and Nominations Sub-Committee

The recommendations of the report of the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee were presented by Bishop Simo Peura.

A. Nominations

The executive committee **receives and forwards** the replacement names for CWME to the central committee for action, asking the interim general secretary to ensure the replacements are invited to the commission meeting in anticipation of confirmation by the central committee:

1. Rev. Rainer Kiefer (M/O) for Rev. Christoph Anders (M/O) from Evangelische Missionswerk (EMW) as a commissioner
2. Rev. Eleonora Hof (F/O/Y) for Mr Johannes Bronsveld (M/L/Y) from the United Protestant Church in Belgium as a commissioner
3. Rev. Philip Woods (M/O) for Rev. José Luis Casal (M/O) from the Presbyterian Church (USA) as a commissioner
4. Rev. Jochen Kirsch (M/O) for Rev. Claudia Bandixen (F/O) from Mission 21 as an advisor
5. Rev. Ann Aldén (F/O) for Ms Eva Christina Nilsson (F/L) from Swedish Mission Council as an advisor.

The executive committee **receives and forwards** the replacement name for CCIA to the central committee for action, asking the interim general secretary to ensure the replacement is invited to the commission meeting in anticipation of confirmation by the central committee.

6. Rev. Dr Joel Edwards (M/O) to replace Prof. Dr Christof Sauer (M/O) as an observer from the World Evangelical Alliance (WEA).

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

B. Permanent Committee on Consensus and Collaboration (PCCC)

The executive committee **receives** the report of the PCCC and **forwards** its recommendations regarding the assembly to the assembly planning committee.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

C. Constitution and Rules

The executive committee **asks**:

- Ms Anne Glynn Mackoul (Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East)
- Bishop John F. White (African Methodist Episcopal Church)
- Ms Emily Evans (Uniting Church in Australia)

to review the report of the working group on constitution and rules; the relevant recommendations of the permanent committee on consensus and collaboration; and further considerations regarding the use of electronic communications for consultation and decision (current Rule XVIII.8/proposed Rule XIX.12) and matters to be submitted for postal and electronic vote (current Rule XVIII.9/proposed Rule XIX.11), and related rule provisions, particularly Rule XIX.10.a; and to report to the executive committee in November for further consideration with recommendations on how to proceed in reporting to the central committee for decision.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

D. Update on Assembly Preparations

The sub-committee received the update on preparations for the 11th WCC Assembly, along with the report of the Assembly Planning Committee, December 2019, with appreciation for the continuing work on the assembly. A progress update, including on nominations, will be shared with the executive committee at its next meeting in November 2020.

The executive committee **requests** that the interim general secretary inform all member churches, ecumenical partners, central committee members and commission members of the new dates for the 11th WCC Assembly; encouraging those churches and partners that have not named their delegates or delegated representatives to do so by 31 March 2021; and requesting updates to existing nominations as may be needed due to the postponement.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

In order to honour the wishes of member churches who already nominated their delegates, youth delegates who were initially nominated for the assembly in 2021, even if they reach 31 years old by the time of the assembly in 2022, should still be considered youth.

The executive committee **exceptionally sets** the age of youth delegates for the 11th assembly as those who will turn 30 by the end of September 2021 because of the assembly postponement, but only for those youth delegates which were named by 3 June 2020 (date of official notification of the postponement) and **asks** the interim general secretary to include this information in the letter going out to the member churches as described above.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The executive committee **approves** the dates of the 11th WCC Assembly, taking place in Karlsruhe, Germany from 31 August to 8 September under the theme *Christ's love moves the world to reconciliation and unity*, with pre-assemblies taking place 29-30 August.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The executive committee **expresses gratitude** to the Assembly Planning Committee for its work and **affirms** the spirit and vision expressed in the report of its meeting in Karlsruhe, Germany in December 2019 as the basis for continued planning.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The executive committee **requests** that the Assembly Planning Committee, at its meeting by video conference in September, give particular attention to the following:

1. The thematic and practical implications of current global realities such as COVID-19 and growing social unrest in response to racism and other inequalities;
2. The coherence of biblical texts for daily use in prayer, thematic plenaries, home groups; Bible study and other programmatic elements;
3. The refinement of ecumenical conversation themes, abstracts and profile of cooperation with member churches and ecumenical partners in preparing the conversations;
4. The *Brunnen* programme as the space to encourage interaction with the wider ecumenical movement through networking zones, exhibitions and workshops; and
5. Different financial scenarios that will influence final plans for the assembly as envisioned by the Assembly Planning Committee or may require a reduced approach should sufficient funding not be secured.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

Invitations to churches that are not members of the WCC, but with whom the WCC has a close working relationship, i.e. Roman Catholic Church, Pentecostal churches and applicant churches, have not been sent out due to the postponement of the central committee.

The executive committee **requests** that the interim general secretary issue invitations to churches that are not members of the WCC, but with whom the WCC has a working relationship, to nominate delegated observers.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

E. Dates and venue of executive committee meetings

The executive committee **agrees** to the following meeting dates and venues:

1. The executive committee will meet 9-13 November 2020 by video conference
2. The executive committee will meet on 21-22 June 2021 in Geneva
3. The executive committee will meet 10-16 November 2021 (arrivals on 9 and departures on 16 afternoon or 17), venue to be determined.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The report of the personnel, staffing and nominations sub-committee was adopted by consensus by the executive committee. Bishop Swenson thanked the sub-committee for the work done.

X. Report of the Programme Sub-Committee

The recommendations of the report of the programme sub-committee were presented by Rev. Karin van den Broeke.

A. Moderator's address

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

- **receive** the address with appreciation;
- **underline** the focus on the unsettling effects of COVID-19, especially for the most vulnerable people;
- **thank** the moderator and the leadership team for the work done under the very special COVID-19 circumstances.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

B. General Secretary's Mid-July 2020 Accountability Report

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

- **receive** the report with appreciation;
- **underline** his focus on solidarity in the crisis of COVID-19;
- **thank** the interim general secretary and his staff for the monthly reports and the work accomplished under special circumstances.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

C. Narrative reports 2019, full and summary

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

- **receive** the 2019 narrative reports on the programmatic work with appreciation;
- **highlight** the pilgrimage of justice and peace with Asia as an excellent example of moving together with WCC member churches and regional ecumenical organisations in justice and peace;
- **affirm** the necessity of addressing racism in its different manifestations;

- **reaffirm** the importance of eco-justice;
- **affirm** the work accomplished;
- **thank** the general secretary and his staff for their faith and endurance.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

D. WCC 2020 Plans Monitoring as of June 2020

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:
- **receive** the 2020 monitoring report with appreciation;
- **highlight** how COVID-19 is used as an opportunity for strengthening communication within the fellowship;
- **encourage** further monitoring of plans and budgets;
- **affirm** the direction of responding to the challenges as an opportunity to develop hybrid methods of communication within the fellowship of churches.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

E. Revised "Called to Transformative Action – Ecumenical Diakonia" resource document

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:
- **receive** the revised document "Called to Transformation – Ecumenical Diakonia" as recommended by the executive committee in November 2019;
- **share** the document as a working resource for internal use with member churches and ecumenical partners, before the central committee receives the document;
- **approve** the communication plan;
- **ask** the ecumenical diakonia reference group to provide an additional resource on the diaconal work of the churches in the context of COVID-19;
- **thank** the ecumenical diakonia reference group for the work accomplished.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

F. Evaluation Report Jerusalem Inter-Church Centre (JIC) and WCC Management Response

The programme sub-committee discussed the need to consolidate the work of the different WCC initiatives in the region, to secure their sustainability and increase their ownership by local member churches. It also discussed the need to review existing contracts with funding partners. The committee recognizes the need to implement a new structure in early 2021.

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:
- **take note** of the Evaluation Report of the WCC Jerusalem Inter-Church-Centre (JIC);
- **take note** of the proposed new structure and mandate of the Jerusalem Inter-Church-Centre (JIC);
- **underline** the need for EAPPI as an ecumenical initiative to operate within its budget;
- **ask** the general secretary to present a timeline for implementation, a structure for ongoing monitoring and evaluation and a risk assessment analysis on the proposed structure for presentation in the executive meeting November 2020.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

G. Transversal on Overcoming Racism (T6)

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

- **receive** the document on the transversal on overcoming racism;
- **underline** the necessity to strengthen the ongoing work on overcoming racism in its different manifestations as an integral part of the WCC work;
- **request** that detailed plans and budget for the transversal on overcoming racism be presented at the executive committee meeting in November 2020;
- **establish** the transversal on overcoming racism as of 1 January 2021.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

H. Follow-up to executive committee decisions on programme 2019

The programme sub-committee recommends that the executive committee:

- **receive** the document with appreciation for information.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

Rev. Karin van den Broeke reported that the leadership of the programme and finance sub-committees met, together with the interim general secretary and staff serving the sub-committees, on 24 July to address matters requiring confirmation between the programme and finance sub-committees regarding the sustainability of WCC programmatic work and discuss the need to align proposals for modifying the WCC strategic plan 2018-2021 and financial strategy 2018-2021, in light of the assembly taking place in 2022. The notes from this meeting are published in Appendix 2.

The report of the programme sub-committee was adopted by consensus by the executive committee. Bishop Swenson thanked the sub-committee for their work.

XI. Report of the Finance Sub-Committee

The recommendations of the report of the finance sub-committee were presented by Rev. Karl Johnson.

The finance sub-committee reaffirmed the importance of the monthly accountability reports by the interim general secretary, and encouraged him to continue this initiative.

A. Finance Overview

The finance sub-committee took note of the fact that financial forecasting would be required early in September, in order to identify instances where funding partners should be consulted concerning the amendments to plans, including any projects where expenditure might not be required to the level budgeted, to achieve the same objectives.

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee:

1. **appoint** KPMG as auditors for the year 2020;

2. **delegate authority** to the leadership of the finance sub-committee to decide upon the level of loan reimbursement in September 2020;
3. **require** that a report be presented in November 2020 on the monitoring of reservations at the Château de Bossey, and on any actions taken to manage costs, extending consideration to impacts for budget 2021; and
4. **require** that the interim general secretary implement monthly monitoring, to ensure that progress is made towards completion of staff evaluations for 2019; and with a further report on the status to be brought in November 2020.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

B. Extension of the WCC financial strategy 2018-2021

The central committee approved and adopted the *WCC financial strategy 2018 to 2021* in June 2018, following review of the draft in executive committee in June and November 2017. Further to the decision in June 2020 to postpone the assembly to 2022, the financial strategy should be extended by central committee in June 2021, to cover the period 2018-2022, with new indicators for 2022, as may be required.

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee **require** that the financial strategy be updated to include the year 2022, for discussion at the executive committee meeting in November 2020, before submission to central committee in June 2021.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

C. Programme Financial Profile 2021

The financial profile for 2021 includes programme income at CHF 17.2 million, being CHF 1.5 million higher than the level of programme income for 2020 under the revised budget. The increase in programme income profiled compared to the revised budget 2020 concerned principally EAPPI and special projects (over CHF 1 million).

The level of reduction in expenditure in the financial profile 2021, compared with the original budget 2020 is about CHF 0.7 million. With these adjustments, all areas highlighted by the interim general secretary in special plans for sustainability were included.

The budget for 2021 for assembly planning and pre-assembly events was not included in the programme financial profile. The sub-committee heard that the assembly office and finance staff had worked together with the Karlsruhe assembly office to support a future application for German government funding for the WCC 11th Assembly in Karlsruhe in 2022.

The finance sub-committee noted that:

- a programme deficit of CHF 63,000 remained to be addressed;
- a 2% draw on the pension fund reserve was included in the model, but that such a step should be considered carefully before inclusion in the budget to be brought for approval in November;

- a revised organisational structure was proposed for Middle East programmatic activities, bringing EAPPI and JIC together; and
- the final budget would require to be adapted depending on the response to funding requests, and any evolution in exchange rates, in accordance with usual practice.

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee **require** that:

1. the proportion of net infrastructure costs to programme income, with target of 13%, be maintained in planning 2021;
2. the assembly budget be further developed, for both 2021 and 2022, and be brought to the next meeting in November 2020, and with more than one scenario, as may be necessary, depending on the timing of the decision from the German government concerning the funding application;
3. the management responsibilities for JIC and EAPPI, in particular with regard to relations with funding partners and national coordinators; and concerning implementation of conditions in special funding agreements; be set out in an authority matrix, and their assignment to staff duly considered by the interim general secretary before finalising the restructuring; and
4. the final budget be further developed for presentation together with the draft Plans 2021 in November 2020.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

D. Reports of the steering committee to the general secretary

The efforts of staff, the WCC lawyer and the Implenia team, for their preparation of materials for the steering committee meeting which convened on 16 July 2020, were acknowledged with gratitude.

Three points were highlighted from the report arising from that meeting.

1. The sale of the Kyoto plot was now delayed until June 2021, as a result of COVID-19 impacts. The financial plan approved in February 2020 by the steering committee had set a target of CHF 36 million in net proceeds before tax for WCC.
2. The fact that WCC had decided in November 2019 to pursue the strategy of moving to the Kyoto building in 2023, with sister organisations and tenants, was recognised by Implenia as a factor increasing the attractiveness of Kyoto on the investment market. It was proposed by Implenia that the costs and risks for WCC as a tenant should be assessed in September 2020, and that Implenia would participate in addressing the costs and risks, by adjusting the financial plan for Kyoto.
3. The steering committee shared the following guidance in its report concerning sub-lease agreements for sister organisations in Kyoto:
    - In working with sister organisations, who would move at the request of WCC, efforts should be made to ensure that suitably adapted space in Kyoto is assigned, respecting the rates currently paid by the sister organisations in the Ecumenical Centre;
    - Consideration should be given to developing a view on the mutual commitments of WCC and LWF concerning the potential and plans for shared investment in the Lima building, when developing the plan and sub-lease for the LWF removal to

Kyoto; and consultation should take place between the WCC interim general secretary and the LWF general secretary in this respect in September 2020.

E. Transaction Review Process

The transaction review process document was presented as a helpful tool for keeping the executive committee informed of progress in the project. Interest had been expressed by third parties in both the Stockholm and Durban plots and projects. In particular, for the Stockholm building, a study was now in progress on the feasibility of selling the office space by floor. In the autumn the steering committee will consider the strategy for lease or sale of land for the Stockholm building, with a recommendation for decision to executive committee in November 2020.

F. Current financial situation and fiduciary responsibility

The current financial situation was summarised:

- Financial planning is going ahead with confidence, even in this time of uncertainty, with a target of CHF 17.2 million programme income for 2021. The commitment is to plan for programmes and assembly pre-events in 2021 within available funds, without deficit, and plans will be adapted accordingly to match the available income, as assessed in November 2020.
- General reserves of almost CHF 7 million are in place, and can be drawn on as required this year, in particular to cover the budgeted deficit at the Château de Bossey.
- There is regular financial reporting and monitoring at the staff leadership level, to ensure that any unexpected risks are addressed, and actions taken.
- The Green Village project presents potential to ensure the sustainability of the council in the long term. The pension fund loan will be substantially reduced in 2020, and with the sale of the Kyoto plot and project, planned for 2021, there is the perspective of a reserve for investment in WCC's own buildings.

The finance sub-committee recommends that executive committee **require** that at the next meeting in November, time is allowed in plenary to hear a report on the financial situation and perspectives.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The report of the finance sub-committee was adopted by consensus by the executive committee. Bishop Swenson thanked the sub-committee for their work.

XII. Report of the steering committee for the real estate project

Rev. Prof. Dr Ioan Sauca present the report of the steering committee for the real estate project from its meeting on 16 July 2020.

Fr Sauca highlighted several points:

- Concerning the residential building, Montreal, to date over CHF 13 million has been collected from the sale of land. For this project, WCC's overall target for net proceeds, before tax, is CHF 17.3 million.

- The Kyoto sale is delayed to June 2021. WCC's overall target for net proceeds before tax from this project is CHF 36 million; however, this target depends on the outcome of competitive bidding from investors, when the project is brought to market. Implenia shows its commitment and determination for this sale; it is advancing the costs for the construction of the underground car park, until the investor process is concluded.
- The hotel, Rio, represents phase two of the project, to be built from 2022 to 2024. A building permit has not yet been obtained; a financial plan has not yet been developed. It is only in 2021, when the proceeds from Kyoto can be more closely estimated, that WCC will decide on its strategy, whether to lease land, or to sell it; or whether to invest in the project. At this stage, a development agreement has been prepared between the hotel operator and Implenia, to which WCC is also counterparty, since it is the landowner; and a lease agreement has been prepared between the hotel operator and the WCC, as the landowner. These agreements are necessary in order to proceed with the building permit requests, and increase the value of the land.
- The Swiss One Planet Living Association announced that it had lost the right to use the WWF "One Planet Living" brand, which is now held by a UK association, named Bioregional. At the July meeting, a transition period to 2024 was nonetheless proposed. The steering committee recommended continuing with the Association, but set certain conditions.

The steering committee recommends that executive committee:

- **confirm** the continued work with the One Planet Living Association, provided that:
  1. the Association confirm before 31 August that its agreement with Bioregional on the continued and limited use by the association of the One Planet Living name for the relevant period has been signed ; and
  2. the association provide a draft addendum to the signed agreement before 31 August, for consideration by the WCC.

- **require**
  1. that a report be brought to the steering committee on the conclusion of negotiations on compensation from the association, before signature of the addendum; and
  2. that the addendum be signed by the interim general secretary and a member of the leadership of the central committee.

The recommendations were approved by consensus.

The steering committee recommends that executive committee **require** that, further to the recommendation of the steering committee, the contracts for the development and lease of the future hotel building be signed by the interim general secretary, jointly with the moderator or one of the vice-moderators of the central committee.

The recommendation was approved by consensus.

The report of the steering committee was adopted by consensus by the executive committee.

Bishop Swenson thanked the interim general secretary for the presentation and members of the steering committee for their work.

XIII. Second Presentation of Public issues

The report of the public issues sub-committee was introduced by H.E. Metropolitan Nifon. He commended the sub-committee for its hard work.

The public issues sub-committee had received, revised and recommended texts on the following issues to the executive committee for action (see Appendix 3):

- Statement on Situations of Concern in Nigeria
- Statement on Crisis in Lebanon
- Minute on Jerusalem Jaffa Gate Properties Case Outcome

A. Statement on Situations of Concern in Nigeria

The statement on Situations of Concern in Nigeria, as revised by the sub-committee, was adopted by consensus.

B. Statement on the Crisis in Lebanon

The statement on the Crisis in Lebanon, as revised by the sub-committee, was adopted by consensus.

C. Minute on the Jaffa Gate

The statement on the Jerusalem Jaffa Gate Properties Case Outcome, as revised by the sub-committee, was adopted by consensus.

D. Draft Statement on the Annexation of Occupied Palestinian Territories

The draft Statement on the Annexation of Occupied Palestinian Territories by the State of Israel was not recommended to the executive committee for action, in light of the lack of consensus among member churches in the region on the desirability of such a statement at this time, and feedback from several local churches that – given that no action has yet been taken to implement the threatened annexation and opposition to annexation seems to be mounting both in Israel and the Jewish diaspora – it would be better to refrain from any further action on this matter until there are further developments.

E. Other public issues under consideration

The following issues were also discussed in the sub-committee and presented to the plenary.

Hagia Sophia – The WCC Interim General Secretary's letter of 11 July was affirmed, concerning the re-conversion of Hagia Sophia in Istanbul from a museum back to a mosque, underlining the negative impacts on inter-religious relations, and appealing for this decision to be reversed and for Hagia Sophia to be retained as the shared heritage of humanity. The very high level of media attention that this initiative received around the world was welcomed and the committee was also grateful for the support expressed for WCC's stance

by leading Muslim counterparts, as referred to in the WCC news release issued on 21 July. The committee acknowledged with deep sadness that on the concluding day of the executive committee meeting, 24 July 2020, the reconversion of Hagia Sophia as a mosque took place. Prayerful solidarity and support by WCC member churches around the world was requested for the Ecumenical Patriarchate in its efforts to challenge and reverse this gravely regressive decision. This Christian solidarity will be formally conveyed to the Ecumenical Patriarchate, along with the actions taken by WCC in relation to this matter.

H.E. Archbishop Vicken expressed unhappiness that the executive committee had decided not to make a statement at this time. He informed the committee that at 13:00 his church would ring the bells of every church after which there would be a prayer for Hagia Sophia and the Christian communities in Turkey.

H.E. Metropolitan Serafim added that in many Orthodox countries there would also be the ringing of bells as if for a funeral. He asked that consideration of bringing the topic of respecting places of worship for their original purposes be part of the interfaith dialogue work of the council.

The moderator of the public issues sub-committee, along with other executive committee members, underlined the need for marking this sorrowful day and asked that a communication (e.g. news release) go out with this sad news for the worldwide Christian community. H.E. Metropolitan Serafim was asked to offer a prayer in this respect.

Azerbaijan and Armenia – The statement issued by the Interim General Secretary on 16 July was also welcomed, regarding the recent hostilities between Azerbaijan and Armenia, and affirmed the call for de-escalation of the confrontation and renewed engagement in diplomatic efforts to find a solution to the root causes of the conflict. The fact that the fighting had ceased or greatly reduced over the last few days was seen as a positive development, but the continuing seriousness and danger of the situation was underlined. WCC and its member churches should remain closely apprised of developments on the ground, and WCC will convey the executive committee's deep concern and solidarity to the Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin).

Ethiopia – Concern was expressed on the escalating tensions over the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, threatening peaceful relations between Ethiopia and Egypt and Sudan, as well as the situation within Ethiopia following recent unrest and violence. WCC is currently engaged in consultations both with member churches in Ethiopia and the other affected countries, and with the All Africa Conference of Churches (AACC) on appropriate ecumenical responses to the situation. No action by the executive committee was recommended at this time.

Cyprus – With regard to the 46th anniversary of the Turkish invasion of Cyprus (20 July) the communication department plans to profile this occasion via an interview with Cypriot church leadership. No action by the executive committee was recommended at this time.

Brazil – The situation in Brazil in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, and particularly its impact on Indigenous Peoples and Quilombola communities, is a matter of grave concern

that was raised with WCC in a letter from CONIC. WCC is currently pursuing a multi-faceted response to this issue, including direct communication with President Bolsonaro, as well as urgent appeals to the UN human rights system. No action by the executive committee was recommended at this time.

75th Anniversary of the United Nations – 2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the United Nations, which has been a close partner of the WCC in many aspects of its work since both organizations were founded. The importance of this partnership in the work of the ecumenical movement was affirmed. WCC is taking initiatives to mark this important anniversary, including the publication of "Voices of Faith at the United Nations" and an historical overview of the relationship between the WCC and the UN. It was suggested that the interim general secretary send a formal letter of congratulations to the UN secretary-general.

70th Anniversary of the start of the Korean War – 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War (25 June). WCC and its partners are lifting up this anniversary as an occasion for fresh initiatives for peace on the Korean Peninsula at a time when recent high-level political dialogue seems to have foundered – in particular through the global Light of Peace campaign for peace on the Korean Peninsula, the Joint Ecumenical Peace Message launched by WCC on 22 June, the Women of Faith Virtual Pilgrim Team Visit (PTV) to South Korea (13-15 July), and the People's Korea Peace Agreement promoted by the National Council of Churches in Korea and launched on 23 July.

Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki – The atomic bombings took place on 6 and 9 August 1945, 75 years ago this year. Initiatives are being undertaken by WCC to mark this occasion, including through a series of blog-posts from different perspectives around the world, as an opportunity to leverage further commitment and engagement in the ecumenical movement's work for the global elimination of nuclear weapons.

A memorandum was prepared by Mrs Anne Glynn-Mackoul, on Public Issues Statements: Principles, Policies and Understandings. The memo will be considered by the LCC.

The report of the public issues sub-committee was adopted by consensus.

XIV. Closed Session

Dr Agnes Abuom convened and moderated the closed session of the executive committee and invited the interim general secretary to introduce the issues for discussion.

A. Governance

The members were informed that a question had been raised by a member of the central committee following the letter of Dr Abuom, asking the central committee to vote by post/email on the proposed amendment to Rule XVIII.9 to temporarily expand the scope of decisions that may be proposed by the executive committee to the central committee by postal/electronic vote, until the central committee is able to meet in-person in June 2021.

The executive recognized that in the usual process amendments to the rules are agreed by consensus during in-person meetings of the central committee, i.e. as provided in Rule XX. The executive committee, at its meeting in June, had deemed that it could be a risk to the council to wait for an in-person meeting of the central committee before suggesting this change and thus launched the vote.

Upon further reflection, the committee agreed that, given this part of Rule XX, it might have been preferable that the request for a postal vote be accompanied by the possibility to engage electronically in discussion via an online discussion portal similar to the one in use by the executive committee.

The executive committee **agreed** that the request for a postal vote be followed with a communication to the members of the central committee advising them that a monitored portal had been established to facilitate discussion of the proposed temporary amendment to Rule XVIII.9, i.e. to build consensus.

The executive committee **agreed** to invite the central committee to use the portal to ask questions, make comments and engage in discussion regarding the proposed amendment; and to extend the notice period for voting to September 30.

B. Search Committee

The executive committee took note that, since the conclusion of the work of the search committee and notification to the moderator of the central committee that its work was completed, pending presentation of the search committee report to the next meeting of the central committee; the global pandemic has interrupted the timing such that the next meeting of the central committee has been postponed by fifteen months.

Noting that the search committee reports directly to the central committee and not to the executive committee, the executive committee recognized that some communication with the persons nominated by the search committee would need to take place regarding the postponement.

The executive committee **affirmed** that the moderator of the central committee, and not the moderator of the search committee, should conduct communications between the WCC and the nominees.

XV. Closing remarks

At the conclusion of the executive committee meeting, Bishop Dr Mary Ann Swenson thanked the interim general secretary and WCC staff for the preparation of the meeting. Bishop Petra Bosse-Huber expressed the executive committee's thanks to the moderator, Dr Agnes Abuom and to the vice-moderator, Bishop Swenson, for their leadership during the meeting. Dr Abuom added her thanks to the committee members, including the sub-committee moderators and rapporteurs, for all the work accomplished.

The meeting was adjourned and Rev. Dr Hyunju Bae led the committee in a closing prayer.

Appendix 1 – Participants List

Dr Agnes ABUOM, Anglican Church of Kenya
Bishop Mary Ann SWENSON, United Methodist Church
Fr Prof. Dr Ioan SAUCA, World Council of Churches

Rev. Dr Festus Ambe ASANA, Presbyterian Church in Cameroon
H.E. Archbishop Dr Vicken AYKAZIAN, Armenian Apostolic Church (Mother See of Holy Etchmiadzin)
Rev. Dr Samson Olasupo Adeniyi AYOKUNLE, Nigerian Baptist Convention
Rev. Dr Hyunju BAE, Presbyterian Church of Korea
Bishop Petra BOSSE-HUBER, Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland
Ms Emily Jane EVANS, Uniting Church in Australia
Mrs Anne GLYNN-MACKOUL, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and All the East
Archpriest Mikhail GOUNDIAEV, Russian Orthodox Church (Moscow Patriarchate)
Rev. Karl JOHNSON, Jamaica Baptist Union
Mr Thomas Hyeono KANG, Igreja Evangélica de Confissão Luterana no Brasil – substitute
H.E. Metropolitan Serafim KYKOTIS, Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Alexandria and All Africa
Rev. Everdith Yaritza LANDRAU, Presbyterian Church (USA)
Rev. Dr Manhong LIN, China Christian Council
H.E. Metropolitan Zachariah Mar NICHOLOVOS, Malankara Orthodox Syrian Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr NIFON OF TARGOVISTE, Romanian Orthodox Church
Bishop Simo PEURA, Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland
Bishop Rex R. B. REYES, Jr., Episcopal Church in the Philippines
Rev. Karin VAN DEN BROEKE, Protestant Church in the Netherlands
Bishop John F. WHITE, African Methodist Episcopal Church

Apologies
Rev. Cora Luisa ANTONIO MATAMOROS, Iglesia Morava en Nicaragua
H.E. Dr Archbishop Abune AREGAWI, Ethiopian Orthodox Tewahedo Church
H.E. Metropolitan Prof. Dr GENNADIOS OF SASSIMA, Ecumenical Patriarchate
Rev. Martina Viktorie KOPECKÁ, Czechoslovak Hussite Church
Rev. Taaroanui MARAEA, Église protestante Maohi

Advisor
Mr Rudelmar BUENO DE FARIA, ACT Alliance

Staff
Ms Charlotte BELOT, Staff
Mr Douglas L. CHIAL, Interim Director in the Office of the General Secretary (Co-host)
Ms Catherine CHRIST-TAHA, Staff (Minute-taker)
Ms Elaine DYKES, Director, Finance
Ms Marianne EJDERSTEN, Director, Communications
Mr Marc-Henri HEINIGER, Staff (Co-host)
Mr Mark JOHNSON, Manager, Finance
Mr Georges LEMOPOULOS, Consensus Consultant
Rev. Dr Odair Pedroso MATEUS, Interim Deputy General Secretary
Prof. Dr Isabel Apawo PHIRI, Deputy General Secretary
Mr Peter PROVE, CCIA Director

Appendix 2 – Notes from the meeting of the Joint Leadership of the Programme Sub-Committee and Finance Sub-Committee

The leadership of the programme and finance sub-committees met, together with the interim general secretary and staff serving the sub-committees, on Wednesday, 22 July 2020. The moderators of the sub-committees confirmed their respective sub-committees had completed their agenda on Tuesday and would review reports on Thursday. The group addressed the following:

1. **Review of any matters requiring confirmation between the programme and finance sub-committees regarding the sustainability of WCC programmatic work**

Discussion centred on the proposed consolidation of JIC and WCC activities in Jerusalem. Both committees are bringing forward recommendations affirming the principle, but requesting more information in November for a final approval, i.e. review of existing contracts, timeline for implementation, plan for monitoring and evaluation, confirmation with partners, risk management analysis, etc.

The interest of both committees was to ensure the successful consolidation and to strengthen WCC activities in Jerusalem and ensure ownership by member churches. The interim general secretary confirmed the bringing more input to the executive committee in November would not significantly delay implementation in early 2021.

In addition, following discussion on the financial situation of the WCC, it was affirmed that the programme profiles for 2020 and 2021 are aligned with revised budget 2020 and the funding request budget 2021, respectively; and that plans and budgets for 2021 will be adjusted in response to funding requests.

2. **Align proposals for modifying the WCC strategic plan 2018-2021 and financial strategy 2018-2021, in light of the assembly taking place in 2022**

The sub-committees have each taken note of the need to extend the WCC strategic plan and financial strategy by one year, i.e. 2018-2022. Proposals for both will be brought to the executive committee in November for presentation to the central committee in June 2021.

Appendix 3 – Public Issue Statements

Statement on Situations of Concern in Nigeria

May those who sow in tears reap with shouts of joy. (Psalms 126:5)

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting by video conference on 20-24 July 2020, takes special note of a number of situations of concern that have been brought to its attention in Nigeria. Nigeria is one of the WCC's priority countries in the context of the Pilgrimage of Justice and Peace, and Africa's most populous nation, with many diverse communities of faith, and a vibrant church and ecumenical life.

A recent spate of violent attacks in northern Nigeria has once again cost many lives, destroyed much property and resulted in further displacement of affected people and communities. Christian communities and church leaders have been among those seriously affected by such attacks. Growing insecurity in the north-west of the country adds to the challenges posed by a longstanding Islamist extremist insurgency in the north-east. Recent attacks and insecurity have particularly affected the states of Borno, Adamawa, Taraba, Plateau, Niger, Kaduna, Katsina, Zamfara and Sokoto. In addition to armed extremist actions, inter-communal violence, livestock raids and simple banditry have created a situation of endemic insecurity for many communities and vast numbers of people living in these areas, which the COVID-19 pandemic has compounded.

The recent lockdown imposed in some states to limit the spread of the virus has also compounded a long-term crisis of sexual and gender-based violence in Nigeria. A major spike in cases of such violence prompted 36 governors to declare a state of emergency over rape and attacks against women and children in the country. Nigeria's police chief reported 717 rapes nationally between January and May this year, equating to one rape every five hours. Moreover, results of a 2019 survey suggest that up to one in every three Nigerian girls could have experienced sexual assault by the time they reach 25. However, the number of successful prosecutions of rape suspects remains low and stigma often prevents victims from reporting incidents. Recently, the brutal rape and murder of 22-year-old university student Uwavera Omozuwa at a church where she was studying in the southern Nigerian city of Benin has become emblematic of the crisis, and strengthened demands for major legal and social reforms.

The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are also deeply felt in the economic arena, The officials responsible for developing Nigeria's economic recovery plan estimate that 39.4 million people could be unemployed by the end of 2020 without major government intervention and support. Food insecurity resulting from the pandemic is already affecting many communities – especially the poor and the marginalized – with Lagos, the Federal Capital Territory and 16 northern states particularly vulnerable to the food and nutrition crisis. 20 million Nigerians are expected to experience food shortages this year alone.
In the midst of these challenges, the Executive Committee also takes note of, and celebrates, the many signs of hope arising from the ministry of the churches in Nigeria, together with their ecumenical, inter-religious and international partners:

- Leadership by the churches through the Christian Council of Nigeria (CCN) in peace-building initiatives. A prominent example is the establishment of the Peace-building and Trauma-healing Centre located at the Institute of Church and Society, Jos, in 2016, responding to issues of insecurity, providing capacity-building and training for religious leaders in peace-building, and offering psychosocial support to traumatized individuals including women. WCC Pilgrim Team Visits to Nigeria in 2017 affirmed and encouraged the churches in their work for peace.

- Increased inter-religious cooperation for peace – including through the Nigeria Inter-Religious Council, and reflected in the establishment of the International Centre for Interfaith Peace and Harmony (ICIPH) in Kaduna, supported by the WCC and the Royal Aal al-Bayt Institute for Islamic Thought (RABIIT), as a hub for cooperation among the Nigerian Christians and Muslims for the purpose of fostering peace and harmony between people of different religions.

- Reduced HIV prevalence in Nigeria, down from 2.8% to 1.4% among adults aged 15-49 years. Diverse ecumenical campaigns involving church leaders, women's groups and youth-led organizations – supported and accompanied by WCC and UNAIDS – have contributed greatly to this success. Nigerian churches continue to play an active role in promoting prevention, testing and treatment adherence, and in addressing issues related to stigma.

- Efforts by the churches to address sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and to engage in national actions plans to combat sexual violence against children in Nigeria, in partnership with WCC and UNICEF.

- Joint initiatives by CCN and other local partners, facilitated by WCC, supporting child-led advocacy for children's rights in Nigeria.

- Positive responses by churches, including through ecumenical and inter-religious collaboration, to curbing the spread of COVID-19 – including by sharing information and promoting public health measures in accordance with WHO and Nigerian government guidelines – building on lessons learned in the HIV response.

The Executive Committee appeals to the International Community (the United Nations, the African Union, and national and local governments) to work in the direction of protecting human rights in Nigeria.

The Executive Committee expresses deep solidarity and prayers for the churches of Nigeria in their efforts to respond to such a constellation of crises, celebrates the signs of hope offered by the churches and their partners in the initiatives described above and many others, and lifts up the people of Nigeria for the support of the global fellowship of churches and of all people of goodwill around the world.

Statement on the Crisis in Lebanon

He has told you, O mortal, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting by video conference on 20-24 July 2020, expresses its great concern and apprehension about the current developments in Lebanon.

The Executive Committee is deeply alarmed by the escalating crises in Lebanon during the past weeks and months, the many associated social, economic and political difficulties, and the challenges related to the sovereignty of the country. The crises that are affecting all the population are even more detrimental to the already vulnerable groups of women, children, people with disabilities, migrant workers and refugees.

For centuries and despite a brutal civil war, Lebanon has been able to retain its ethnic, cultural and religious diversity, in a spirit of pluralism and conviviality. In the midst of a region torn apart by wars, conflicts and occupation, Lebanon has remained an example and symbol of hope and resilience. That example is now in jeopardy.

The Executive Committee affirms that it is incumbent on the government of Lebanon to keep and strengthen its role as the guarantor of the social contract, the stability and security of the country, and the public and human rights of the people. The Executive Committee expresses its support of the Lebanese people and encourages them to remain united in common solidarity in order to emerge from this crisis and not to fall into division and sectarianism. The Lebanese people on all levels – politicians, religious leaders, civilians, young people – have a responsibility to insulate the country from the wider regional political and social forces driving the region to division and destruction.

Religious leaders of all communities have a particularly important role to play in guiding their people through these difficult times towards wisdom, justice, reconciliation and unity.

The World Council of Churches stands in active solidarity with the churches and people of Lebanon, and calls on the government for urgent structural reforms needed to ensure Lebanon's stability, unity and sovereignty.

Minute on Jerusalem Jaffa Gate Properties Case Outcome

The Executive Committee of the World Council of Churches, meeting by video conference on 20-24 July 2020, takes note of the outcome of legal proceedings in the District Court of Jerusalem concerning the Greek Orthodox Church's ownership of the Jaffa Gate properties.

The Executive Committee expresses its prayerful solidarity with the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities in Jerusalem in their efforts to address the implications of this decision. The outcome of these proceedings concerning properties at the entrance of the Christian Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem carries a significance far beyond a mere

property dispute, impacting the Christian presence in Jerusalem and the Status Quo arrangements in the Holy Land more broadly.

Accordingly, we join with the Heads of the Churches and Christian Communities in Jerusalem in appealing to the government of Israel to act in order to safeguard the integrity of the Christian heritage and patrimony in the Old City, as well as the Holy Sites and the rights of the residents of the Christian Quarter of Jerusalem.